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ence-books and extracts from all of the more important constitutional documents are of great value and form a useful addition to one of the best text-books of English history yet published.

NORMAN MACLAREN TRENHOLME.

A Short History of Venice. By WILLIAM ROSCOE THAYER. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1905. Pp. xiii, 355.)

THERE has been a great deal of moralizing and of argument regarding the history and institutions of Venice, mostly by the fervent advocates and opponents of these institutions, but there has been very little impartial and thorough investigation of the sources of that history. Venice has left elaborate memorials, but they have not been carefully analyzed, and until we have more scholarly criticism we cannot know definitely what the history of the Republic is. Romanin's work, which Mr. Thayer considers an "invaluable quarry", was a great advance upon its predecessors (except perhaps Filiasi for the early period) but its statements are often unreliable. The authoritative history of Venice is yet to be written, and it can hardly be written during the present generation. There is too much preliminary work still to be done.

Let us illustrate by examining Mr. Thayer's first chapter. In this he follows the commonly accepted tradition. Speaking of the alleged founding of the city on March 25, A. D. 421, he says that this date "doubtless refers to an actual event, the sending from Padua of maritime tribunes to govern the settlers on the islands of Rialto". The document on which this story rests is a manifest forgery, which has been long discredited (see Filiasi, V. 173: *Le Origini di Venezia*, Manfrin, 20 and 21), and it is hard to see how the truth of an event of the fifth century can be inferred from a forged document of a much later period. There is no credible evidence that any city was founded *at Rialto* until centuries after 421.

Equally unfounded is the statement that Attila's invasion in 452 was the occasion of the foundation of an independent Venetian commonwealth. Doubtless when Attila destroyed the cities of the mainland there were many fugitives to the islands, but that these then organized a permanent commonwealth "which never submitted to domination abroad nor suffered a tyrant at home" is utterly unproved. Nay, it is contradicted by the only contemporary and reliable authorities, Cassiodorus and Procopius. During the Ostrogothic domination in Italy Cassiodorus was pretorian prefect at Ravenna and as such he addressed to the "maritime tribunes" of these islands the letter mentioned by Mr. Thayer (p. 9). In this he says: "We have determined in a letter of *command* already given, that Istria should send to the palace of Ravenna merchandise of wine and oil of which it enjoys this year an unusual abundance, but *do you* who possess numerous ships in the neighborhood, look out with *equal favor of devotion* that what it is prepared to deliver you may study to convey with speed. *Similar* indeed will be the favor of each of the two accomplishments". Cassiodorus uses the same im-

perative in his letter to the Venetian tribunes as to the Istrians, from whom he demands the tribute. In his other letter (22, Bk. 12) he calls Istria a *devoted province*. In his letter to the tribunes he asks them to transport the goods with *equal favor of devotion*. The same word was thus applied to the lagoons and to the subject province of Istria, and it seems idle to contend that it did not include the idea of obedience for the Venetians. It has been said that he speaks in such flattering language as is not consistent with command, but he flatters the Istrians as well, and there is no doubt of *their* subjection.

The lagoon islands were undoubtedly subject to the Ostrogothic kingdom. But that kingdom was soon overthrown by Belisarius; Ravenna was taken and Vitiges sent to Constantinople; then the lagoons with most of the Italian territory passed to the empire of Justinian. Later, the Goths, after Belisarius' departure, recaptured much of the Italian territory but not the lagoon islands, for Procopius tells us (Bk. IV, ch. 24) that "In Venetia few cities remained to the Goths *and the places by the sea to the Romans*, but the Franks made all the rest subject to themselves". Then Justinian sent Narses to reconquer Italy; he came to the head of the Adriatic with his army but was greatly embarrassed to reach Ravenna, since a strong Gothic army barred the way on the mainland, whereupon one John, a relative of Vitalian, who had great experience there, (see Procopius, Bk. IV., ch. 26) suggested to him "to go with all his army along the coast, *the men there being subject to them*, as has been said". This they did, passing over the lagoon territory and aided by the barks of the Venetians in crossing the mouths of the rivers, and they reached Ravenna. Thus Procopius explicitly declares that the Venetians were acting as subjects and therefore the beginnings of their independence must be traced to a later period. It is highly probable that the first great chronicler of Venice, John the Deacon (whom Mr. Thayer incorrectly refers to as Sagorninus) is more nearly correct than subsequent historians and that it is to the period following the invasion of the Langobards in 568 that we must trace the origin of the Venetian commonwealth. Attila's invasion led to the foundation of Venice only in the sense that it increased the population of the islands that long afterwards became the Venetian state.

Mr. Thayer says (p. 6) that in 466 representatives met at Grado and chose tribunes or *gastaldi* to govern each community. There seems to be a confusion here between the "tribunes", ancient Roman officials (whose duties, however, had by this time been greatly modified) and the "gastaldi", a word unknown in Italy at that date but borrowed long afterwards from the name of certain Langobard officials (see DuCange; Pabst, *Forschungen zur Deutschen Geschichte*, II. 442; Hodgkin, VI. 575). Equally unfounded is the statement that Venice was never dependent upon Constantinople. Mr. Thayer himself shows (p. 22) that in the treaty of Aix, Charlemagne acknowledged that the Venetians belonged to the Eastern Empire. Other contestable propositions follow in great number which it is impossible here to examine in detail.

Mr. Thayer's account of the growth of the Venetian state gives us little that is new, and there is a lack of distinction in bringing out the perspective of the great events. The author does not explain as clearly as we should wish how the degenerate Romans who fled to the lagoons became transformed into the brave, energetic, resourceful and masterful Venetians.

His explanation of the machinery by which the oligarchy was established (pp. 100-105) is indefinite. It is not clear how the hereditary principle he speaks of proceeds from the provisions he quotes. Perhaps the best summary of the Venetian constitution is given in the *Quarterly Review* of April, 1886, p. 308, where Mr. Thayer's simile of the pyramid is introduced. But much that is necessary for the understanding of the account has been omitted in this book and the description of the Council of Ten as "the supreme executive branch of the state" (p. 115) or "the Venetian cabinet" (p. 116) is quite misleading. The political activity of that council was called forth (like the dictatorship in Rome) in emergencies and it was not the council itself, but an independent body which determined when its interference was demanded. It does not closely resemble anything in modern governments. The statement (p. 116) that the large number of the Council of Ten made real secrecy impossible reveals rather our own point of view than that of Venice, where that secrecy was on the whole admirably maintained until a later period.

The author following many others attacks the Venetian policy of expansion on the mainland, though he wisely directs his criticism not to the original Italian acquisitions, which were necessary to supply the city and to protect Venetian commerce, but to the more questionable expansion of later years. It is hard to say whether the problem then confronting the Venetians was decided right or wrong. If they had refused to succor Florence and the Visconti had spread over all northern Italy, the end of Venice might have come sooner than it did. Mr. Thayer declares that Venice died from sheer old age. If so, how did her mainland acquisitions lead to her fall?

But it is not fair to judge Mr. Thayer's book solely by these rather microscopic criticisms. He has given us on the whole a much better estimate than those who have made the Republic a mere text for the denunciation of oligarchy. During nearly her whole career Venice was more highly civilized than her neighbors and her people were far happier. Her superior intelligence appears in her sound currency, her national loan and banking system, her admirable provisions regarding her merchant marine (p. 91); her highly developed judiciary; her splendid administration of her colonies and dependencies (pp. 165-208); her ecclesiastical independence; the admirable political education she gave to her own patricians (pp. 223, 224); and her reliance upon expert direction in her affairs. All these things are well set forth, and they justify much of Mr. Thayer's panegyric.

The admirable part of Mr. Thayer's book, however, begins with the

eleventh chapter, which describes the life and art of the Venetian people. His description of Venetian architecture and painting is something unique, and entitles him to the position of an art-critic of the very first order.

Some of the following chapters too are of a high character, particularly the biography of Sarpi. Mr. Thayer concludes that Venice died from old age (pp. 316, 317); that like a species born in one geologic period, it survived into another to which it was not adapted. In one sense this is probably true. Doubtless a nation, like a man, is mortal, but there is no normal number of years for its existence, like the three-score and ten of human life. The Vandal empire in Africa became decrepit in a century while Rome required many centuries to attain even its growth. In another place Mr. Thayer had said very admirably of the creation of Venice (p. 28) "that it put forth the attributes of permanence, which implies not the changelessness of stagnation but adaptability". It is a corollary to this that old age is a condition where the rigidity of ancient custom forbids adaptation to new conditions, so we would like to go a little beyond his diagnosis and find out what it was in Venice that led to this rigidity. The problem is too complicated to be decided by a single guess, but it can safely be said that the oligarchy in failing to prescribe any adequate means for eliminating its own unworthy constituents and for constantly admitting to their places the best and most energetic elements of the lower orders of citizens, failed to provide for an infusion of that fresh blood, which was necessary to keep the state abreast of new conditions. This was at least one cause of the decline. An oligarchy which is itself well-nigh immutable cannot meet the changing requirements of new times.

The first chapters of this history leave much to be desired but the final portion of the book is, on the whole, just, admirable and inspiring.

Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions. By H. MUNRO CHADWICK.
(Cambridge: University Press. 1905. Pp. xiv, 422.)

IN his preface to these *Studies* the author notes the fact that philologists usually have an eye for their own field of work only. To Mr. Chadwick, however, this rule does not seem to apply. Though primarily a linguist, he brings to his work, in addition to a thorough knowledge of the Saxon speech, an evident enthusiasm for historic research. His *Studies* is a series of essays dealing with some of the more important problems of institutional history. The first half of the work is devoted to the Old English social system and is principally a discussion of wergelds and kindred topics. This is prefaced by a study of the Anglo-Saxon monetary system in which the author reaches conclusions widely differing from those recently put forth by Mr. Seeböhm. The second part is a study of the administrative system, and deals with local government, the national council, the origin of nobility and related matters.

Mr. Chadwick is a firm believer in the absolute authority of the Anglo-Saxon king. The witan formed a council merely, whose advice